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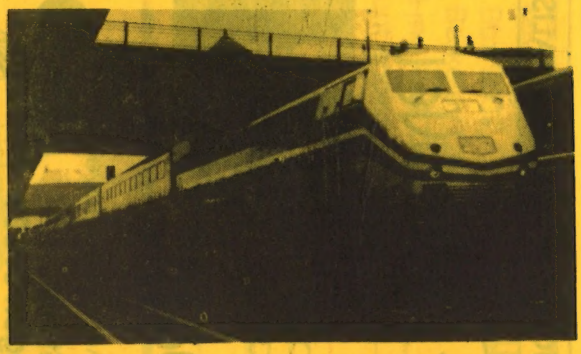

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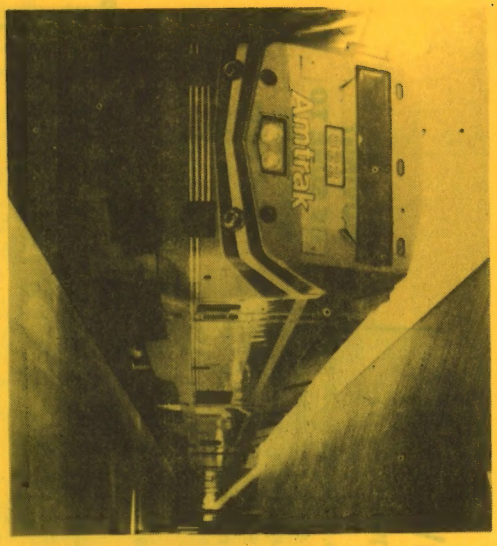

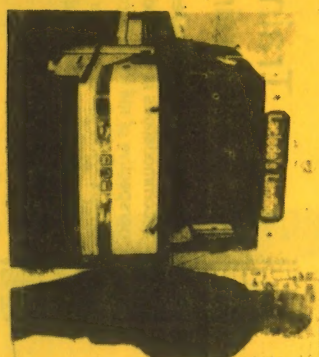

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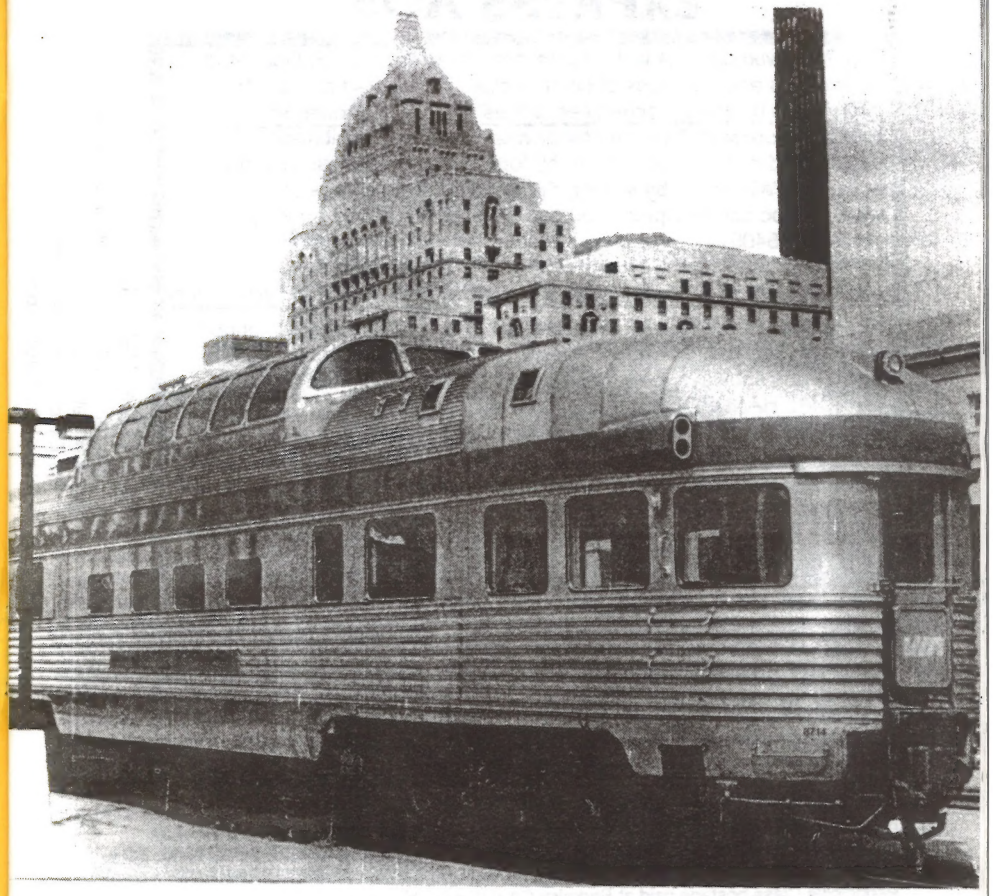

ACROSS CANADA ON THE *CANADIAN*

ON THE COVER

Front cover: Dome-sleeper-observation car "Strathcona Park" brings up the rear of the westbound VIA Rail **Canadian** at Toronto on June 5. The Royal York Hotel, built by the Canadian Pacific Railway, rises above the come car.

Rear cover: Upper—the westbound **Canadian** prepares to leave Jasper, Alberta on June 7. Lower—During the stop in Jasper on June 7, the **Skeena** (left) is parked directly behind the **Canadian** (right).

Photos by Jack M. Turner. In this issue Mr. Turner takes us on a VIA Rail trip across Canada on the famed **Canadian**.

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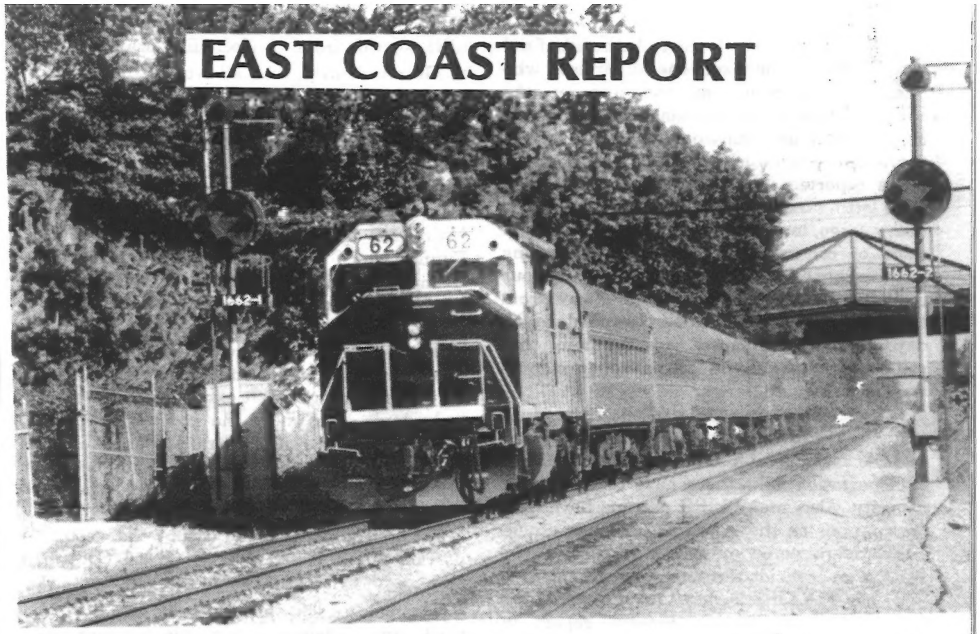
EAST COAST REPORT



MARC train 277, the **Blue Ridge**, brakes to a stop at Rockville MD, on time at 5:21pm on July 10, 1997. The consist includes one of MARC's parlor-cafe cars. The train runs between Washington DC and Martinsburg WV. Photo by Bill Hakkarinen.

Metro-North train 1571 on Wed, July 30 left New Haven on time at 2:57pm, but in a few minutes disaster struck when catenary wires were ripped down in West Haven. Power was lost on mainline tracks 1 and 2 from CP266 at Woodmont to New Haven, and power was lost in the New Haven terminal as well. With track 4 out of service due to ongoing trackwork, things came to a screeching halt. Amtrak train 163 was in the station on track 8 and its 3:15pm departure time came and went. A diesel engine with compromise coupler on the east end was sent to tow train 1571. Shore Line East trains 3630 at 3:20 and 3634 at 4:15 were both advised, "No Metro-North connection today". Train 55, the **Vermonter**, came in on time at 3:55 and was told, "Keep your power on. You'll be here for awhile". West of CP266, eastbound Metro-North and Amtrak trains began stacking up.

Amtrak train 175, the **Patriot**, was told at 5:14 that he'd be held at Chapel Street in the east cut. "We have no place for you in the station. During heavy trackwork in the station, tracks 7 and 9 are out of service, leaving only six platform tracks for use. At about 5:30 the power was back on, and the eastbound "parade of trains" was begun. Westbound would have to wait. Train 175 was told to come slowly into the station behind train 163 so the first one or two cars could platform and New Haven-bound passengers could detrain. SLE train 3644, scheduled to depart at 6:10, was held until 6:30 for several Metro-North arrivals. Train 163 finally departed at 6:38, 3hrs, 23mins late. Ten minutes later, it was time for the Metro-North local at 6:57. At 7:08 I heard on the scanner, "Train 175 cleared for takeoff," and before he closed the microphone the engineer blew the highball horn signal. The train had a 1hr, 38min delay. Behind him was the "Bomb Train" deadheading to Bridgeport to make the next revenue run to Waterbury. Trains were all issued DPOs (drop pantograph orders) between catenary poles 1044 and 1046. During the night the catenary wire was repaired, and the following morning Metro-North had a normal rush hour.

—Bob Underwood.

Metro-North said that it had to prepare for many extra riders the evening of Aug 7, when Garth Brooks gave a free, live concert in Central Park at 7:30. M-N planned to carry 24,000 inbound riders between 2 & 6pm and 17,000 going back between 11pm and 12:17am. M-N added cars on all three lines for the event. The Parks Dept expected up to 600,000 attending the concert.

The New York Transit Authority fired eight flagmen and one supervisor who were working at the site of the reconstruction of the Williamsburg Bridge. An investigation and subsequently the firing of the workers came after the New York Daily News reported in August that the flagmen were letting trains pass as close as four feet to heavy cargo, including 20-ton steel girders and slabs of concrete and equipment, dangling from cranes. The paper also said that four workers had spent three hours away from their posts, and that others seemed to be daydreaming. The paper made the point that rail commuters were in danger from accidents waiting to happen.

The Long Island Rail Road is studying improved access between Long Island and the east side of Manhattan, as the various transportation links there have reached their capacity. Also, many LIRR patrons have final destinations on the east side, and many non-LIRR riders would consider switching to the LIRR if an east side terminal were provided.

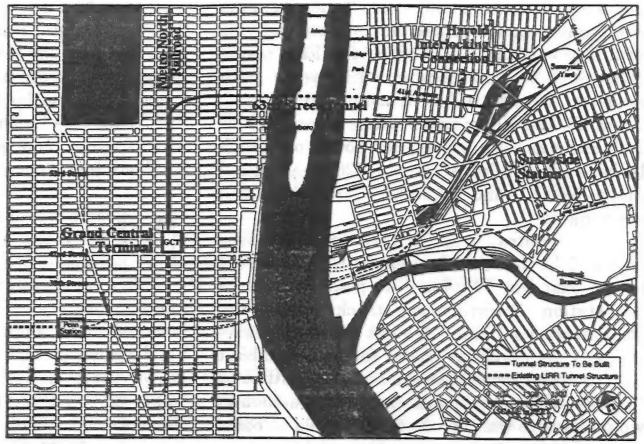
The LIRR selected three alternatives for study in a draft environmental report. In addition, a required no-build alternative is examined. Under the latter, it is assumed that the following improvements were be made: LIRR use of new bi-level coaches and dual-mode engines to provide more riders with a one-seat ride into Penn Station; building new parking facilities at some stations; completing the North End Access project in Grand Central to improve passenger access and circulation; completing the NYCT 63rd St Connector Project; and improving the regional highway system with such things as electronic toll collection, HOV lanes, etc.

The "build" alternative, for an east side terminal, has two parts: providing direct LIRR service from all electrified branch lines to Grand Central, and allowing LIRR trains bound for Penn Station to serve a new station in Sunnyside, Queens.

The proposed route is as follows: Starting near Sunnyside Yard in Queens, a 4600-ft underground connection would be built from the Port Washington Branch and the Main Line to the lower level of the 63rd St Tunnel, which now ends in Queens under 41st Avenue & 29th St. The 63rd St Tunnel has two levels—the upper, presently used by the Q subway line, and the lower, not in use, but built to accommodate LIRR trains. The tunnel now ends at Second Avenue & 63rd St in Manhattan, so that a 5000-ft extension would need to be built deep under the ground the bring LIRR trains to Grand Central at Park Avenue & 42nd St. This tunnel extension would be separate and distinct from tunnels used either by Metro-North or the subway system.

The LIRR would occupy the western portion of the lower level of Grand Central, now used by Metro-North for storage and maintenance. The area would include 10 tracks and 5 island platforms for exclusive use of LIRR. The platforms would serve 12-car trains. The new LIRR facility, to be operated as a "terminal within a terminal", would be separate from Metro-North operations.

Service from all LIRR branch lines would be provided either to Penn Station or to Grand Central. Since dual-mode locos and bi-level cars, to be introduced by 2000, would not be able to run to Grand Central due to restricted clearances in the 63rd St Tunnel, riders on diesel trains would have to transfer to reach Grand Central. Transfers could be made at Jamaica or more easterly points such as Babylon, Hicksville, Huntington, etc.



The LIRR map at right illustrates the East Side Access Grand Central Terminal Alternative. The 63rd St Tunnel, shown in the upper portion of the map, is the key to the project. The existing tunnel is shown as a broken line, and the needed tunnel structure is a solid line. The proposed new Sunnyside station is also shown.

A Day on the Northeast Corridor
By John J. Harmon

The need to run a quick errand in Boston gave me an excuse to make a round trip from Trenton on Amtrak on a hot August Saturday. Amtrak's schedule was not particularly helpful, as the obvious train, #170 the **Patriot**, is the only through train on the NE Corridor that does not call at Trenton. If it did, it would leave about 8:15am and would be ideal. On weekdays there are other Amtrak trains the traveler can take to make a connection at Newark or New York, but on weekends you must rely on a very close NJ Transit connection or face a long layover.

So I bite the bullet and find myself on the platform at Trenton at the improbable hour of 5:30am. Train 12, the **Fast Mail**, is posted as being 20mins late. Drat! I could have used the extra 20mins of sleep.

No. 12 eventually wanders in about 30mins late, and it consists of seven coaches bracketed by two mail cars on the front and five more on the rear. The cafe car is the rear-most car, and it is open and serving hot coffee.

We have a fast run to Newark and make up 10mins. The southbound **Carolinian** is sitting in Newark station, already 10mins late. With a scheduled 20-min layover in New York, I had hoped to be able to dash upstairs to a newsstand, but a conductor advises me that the train could leave at any time; so I decide to wait until New Haven. But Murphy's Law is being strictly enforced today, and the train sits at the platform for the full 20mins as two mail cars are removed from the rear.

Departure from NY is 20mins late, and the anticipated view of the NY City skyline from the Hell Gate Bridge doesn't materialize due to smog and haze which have moved into the area overnight.

We make up another 10mins between NY and Stamford, but lost five of it east of Bridgeport as a Metro-North engineer reports that a door is open on the lead mail car. A stop is made to check it out, but no open door is found.

The stop at New Haven is carded for 25mins, and as the Springfield section must be cut off, I know I have plenty of time to make a newspaper run into the station. Upon returning, I find the Springfield section ready to go, but he has to wait 5mins for one of the mail cars to be worked.

(Suggestion to Amtrak: As most passengers are continuing eastward to Providence and Boston, why not put the Springfield cars on the rear of the train and save 10-15mins?)

Train 95, the **Old Dominion**, arrives and departs on time. On the way to Old Saybrook, we see evidence of installation of catenary support poles for the forthcoming electrification due to be completed in 1999. We meet no. 171, the **Mayflower**, east of Old Saybrook, running about 15mins late.

East of New London, the electrification project is more progressed, as the catenary poles on the north side of the line have been erected and some of the wire on which the catenary will be hung has already been strung.

The bridge is open at Mystic, and we lose another 5mins waiting for a pleasure boat to pass through. Much of the line is being operated as single track today, as construction crews are occupying much of the westbound main in order to install catenary poles.

Train 193, the **Potomac**, is waiting for us at the interlocking east of Westerly. We have delayed him about 15mins on a single-track section.

At Kingston we cross over to the westbound track. The reason for this is not clear, as we meet #173, the **Yankee Clipper**, running west on the eastbound main.

The stop at Providence is an extended one due to the need to work mail, and we leave 25mins late. Unfortunately, this means an MBTA local, headed for a Red Sox game at Fenway Park, originating at Attleboro, gets ahead of us, so the dispatcher tells our engineer to drag his heels for a while, as we won't be able to get around him until Canton Jct. This costs us another 5mins, and we reach Route 128 and Boston 30mins late.

After conducting my business in Boston, I make it back to South Station just in time to catch train 175, the **Patriot**, back to Trenton. This train has a Club Car, so I ask the attendant about getting an upgrade. He directs me to a conductor a couple of cars ahead, who directs me to have a seat in the Club Car and he'll take care of the fare later.

The Club Car actually turns out to be a Metroliner Cafe Car, with tables in the front end, and 2x2 seating rather than the 2x1 seating found in the usual equipment. The space between seats is actually less than in the Custom Class car directly in front of us.

Evan, the attendant, offers lunch, even though it's after 2pm. Besides myself, there are only five people riding Club Class leaving Route 128, although the rest of the train appears full.

The dispatcher puts us on the eastbound main out of Route 128, and we remain there until Providence. Upon leaving Boston we had observed train 170, the **Patriot** arriving about 15mins late, and we meet #172, the **Mayflower**, at Attleboro running on time.

Our conductor is off the extra board, and has no idea how much to charge me for the

upgrade, so he suggests stepping off the train at New London and taking care of business with the ticket agent there. We're running a couple of minutes early, so won't have to worry about delaying the train. But it turns out a couple of others are upgrading to Custom Class, and it all delays the train by about 5mins. But it's revenue in Amtrak's pocket.

We are held east of Westerly in order to allow #84, the **Virginian**, to go by before we cross over to the eastbound main. So the short delay at Kingston meant nothing, as we would have had to wait here anyway. We remain on the eastbound main all the way to New Haven, meeting #174, the **Yankee Clipper**, at Branford, running east on the westbound main. But we make up some time and arrive at New Haven on time.

The Springfield section has already arrived, and the combining of the two trains goes off without a hitch. We meet an on-time #142, the **Bay State**, which runs to Boston via Worcester, just east of Bridgeport.

Evan offers several choices for dinner, and I select the mustard chicken entree, which is accompanied by some red wine he has put in the cooler for me at my request. The chicken is okay, but nothing to write home about.

We run through a brief but violent thunderstorm between Stamford and New Rochelle. The dispatcher has a report of a wire down on the tracks at milepost 29.29, but we have already passed that point.

Train 176, the **Merchants Limited**, is running on time just east of New Rochelle, as a rainbow appears over Long Island Sound. Our scanner tells us that no. 97, the **Silver Meteor** for Florida, is still at Sunnyside Yard due to a mechanical problem with the dorm car. He'll be at least an hour late tonight.

We arrive and depart NY on time, and meet #148, the **Bankers**, running just a few minutes late across the High Line between the Hudson River tunnels and Portal.

Arrival in Trenton is on time, and as I pass through the station I note that the arrivals board lists the ominous word "Delayed" next to #90, the northbound **Silver Palm**.

So ends what may be a typical day on the Northeast Corridor.

Virginia Railway Express may be, in the words of one of its officials, "in a death spiral". Patronage dropped off a whopping 32% in July, mostly as an aftermath of the July 8 Amtrak-freight collision (see last issue) that forced extensive repair work on the line, disrupting operations. There are two other reasons for the dip: a CSX trackwork project in Stafford County that is behind schedule, and a recent improvement to parallel I-95 as the state Highway Dept opened express lanes. Reportedly VRE shortly after the July 8 wreck was losing $9000 per day due to its policy of allowing free rides if trains are over 30mins late. Work at the wreck site was said to be causing 15mins of lost time, and the work was expected to continue into August. Media publicity about the wreck and the ensuing delays probably frightened off some riders.

Metro-North tells a story of a man and woman who recently met on an M-N platform because they were both running for an (on-time) train that they missed and literally bumped into each other. One year later on the same platform they became engaged. The man wrote to M-N: "Thank you for making your trains run exactly on time—one minute later and I would never have met my wife!" M-N said it should amend its mission statement to read: "We will strive...to deliver our service on time...(adding:) for out of punctuality, in the mysterious ways of Eros, can come love".

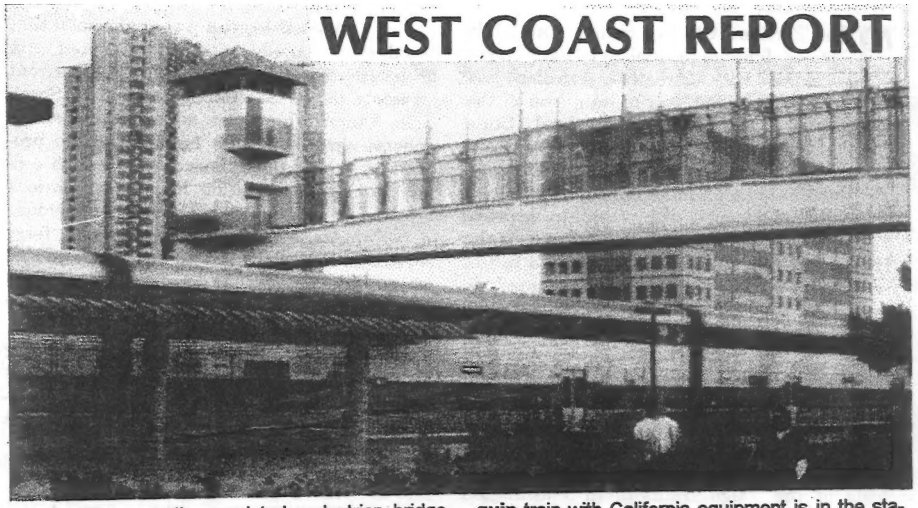
The remnants of Hurricane Danny flooded the Hudson River tunnels into NY's Penn Station July 25. That evening, Clocker Service customers received an Amtrak flyer apologizing for the delays to trains 624 & 628. It explained that the flooding caused signal problems, putting all but one track out of service. The affected trains were scheduled to arrive between 7:45am and 8:45am. Train 624 was 25mins late, train 628 15mins late. In addition, Metroliner 100 was delayed 16mins and train 180 27mins.

A plot to bomb the Atlantic Avenue subway station in Brooklyn and a NY commuter bus was reportedly stymied by police who entered a Brooklyn apartment early on July 31 and arrested two Jordanian men. Police acted on a tip from a resident of the apartment. Subway lines were re-routed and traffic disrupted after police found bombs in the apartment. The men apparently were inspired by July 28 suicide bombings in Jerusalem.

NY State has agreed on a $7.3 billion capital program for Metro-North through 1999. $225 million will go for 10 engines and 48 coaches, $41 million for parking, $122 million for station rehab, $186 million for track and maintenance, $30.5 million for signal improvements, $19 million to complete Grand Central modernization, $53 million for the Secaucus transfer station and $8 million to study extension of M-N beyond Grand Central and into Penn Station and Lower Manhattan. (That last item was insisted upon by Gov. Pataki.)

The IC3 Flexliner is operating in Boston in MBTA service, deadheading to Fitchburg in early a.m. and running into Boston N. Station; then to Beverly and return, to Rockport and return, and back to Fitchburg in the p.m. rush, & deadhead to Boston to lay overnight.

WEST COAST REPORT



Above: The recently-completed pedestrian bridge at the Emeryville CA Amtrak station. A **San Joaquin** train with California equipment is in the station. RTN photo.

San Francisco Muni, in an attempt to reduce the noise at the rails created by its new Breda streetcars, plans to spend $10-15 million over a period of several years to replace rail and switches. The Muni apparently has concluded that aging rail, in combination with the heavy news cars, which weigh 10,000 pounds more than the earlier Boeing cars, is the noise culprit. If that doesn't work, Muni said, the cars' weight could be reduced somehow. While some mechanical changes to cut noise have been made to the new Italian-made cars, further work would be in the expensive range of $40-60 million. The Muni has received numerous complaints about noise from residents near its lines since the cars were introduced. The cars run regularly on the J-Church line, and have been tested on others.

BART Ridership increased by 5.6% during the fiscal year that ended June 30. There was a total of over 75 million rides, compared with 72.4 million in the 1995-6 year. The increase came in the face of increased fares in April. One of the reasons for the increased patronage is the opening of several new stations in recent months, including an entirely new line through Castro Valley to Dublin/Pleasanton. At the same time, the number of rider complaints to BART was up from 6500 in 1995-6 to 7700 in the 1996-7 fiscal year. BART said that train crowding due to more cars than usual being out of service for renovation was one important source of complaints. BART said that a number of rebuilt cars will be returned to service this fall, easing that problem.

Daily average passenger numbers are not at 262,605. The highest daily number BART ever recorded was 357,135 on Nov 16, 1989, about a month after the Loma Prieta earthquake that closed down the Bay Bridge.

In late July it was reported that Union Pacific was about ready to approve a deal that would create the Altamont Commuter Express commuter service between Stockton and San Jose. The $33 million deal with the Altamont Commuter Express Authority may allow service to begin by next March. The deal includes UP making track improvements to allow 79mph commuter train speeds. The 85-mile route is to have nine stations.

SP business car "Stanford", former SP 140, has been released from UP shops and is now yellow, numbered UPP140. Earlier, the former SP 150, the "Sunset", was reported as renumbered to UPP150. It was not known whether the car retains its unpainted stainless steel finish.

Caltrain will hold public hearings on its draft 20-yr strategic. The meetings are all Aug 21, at San Jose City Hall, SamTrans Headquarters in San Carlos, and the San Francisco City Hall. For a list of locations where the draft plan is available, call (800) 660-4287. Written comments will be accepted through Sep 15.

Monterey CA officials may be having second thoughts about re-establishing passenger train service into their city. In a July 31 local report, the city's mayor said "It doesn't look very nice to me" after seeing a photo simulation of an Amtrak train running through Monterey's Window on the Bay park. A city councilwoman remarked that she thinks the city is split on the issue of renewing train service, and that it should go to a public vote.

The Portland OR city council voted July 30 to fund a preliminary study on a Central City Streetcar, smaller and lighter than light rail, to run on a loop of the city's west side, serving Portland State University and Northwest Portland. Grant money is already in place to cover the study. The line would be 4.5 miles long.

The council also voted to approve $200,000 in funding for strengthening the Hawthorne Bridge so it could handle a future streetcar line. There is at present, however, no firm plans to bring streetcars to the east side, over the bridge.

The streetcars that the city has in mind are European-type, 50-70-foot vehicles, costing less than light rail vehicles. It was estimated that service could begin by July 4, 2000.

The FRA authorized high-speed tests of the Talgo trainsets in Washington State. These began Aug 5. The Talgo set normally used on the **Mt. Adams** was assigned to the tests. It is expected that schedule gains of up to 30mins between Seattle and Portland may be possible on existing roadbed. The tests are investigating "cant deficiency" operation, or operation through curves at higher than normal speeds. The speeds will not exceed 79 mph. This is similar to the program requested by NY State, where the Turboliner would be permitted higher curve speeds. In Washington the tests are non-revenue. While the Talgo set is being tested, the **Mt. Adams** was using a 3-car Superliner set.

The Coast Starlight is running regularly with express cars. Internal sources say that at current and projected levels, the mail and express are expected to offset operating deficits on the train. The train's Pacific Parlor cars have begun cycling through the shops for overhaul and retrofit. Replacement equipment is a Superliner diner, converted as a lounge.

While California cars are cycling through the shops for retrofit, one **San Joaquin** trainset will be protected by Horizon cars. One or more trips per day on the **San Joaquin** are also currently powered by an F40 unit.

●●●

Surface Transportation Board in late July ruled in favor of BNSF in a dispute with two Washington cities over permits and environmental reviews. The STB said that the railroad did not have to obtain permits for its operations from the cities of Auburn and Kent because they would unconstitutionally restrict interstate commerce.

A Washington paper reported that the draft of a study has been completed on a proposed extension of the Seattle waterfront streetcar to the Seattle Center and to South Lake Union. The paper added that there is general agreement that funding for the project would be difficult because of its high cost and tight transportation budgets at various levels of government. —Jerome Sheldon.

Alaska Marine Highways ferry service to Bellingham WA has been revised after Alaska's Governor decided not to resume ferry service to Prince Rupert BC. The ferry "Matanuska" has been assigned to a weekly Bellingham to Skagway sailing—meaning three weekly sailings from Bellingham, the others using the "Columbia" and the "Malaspina". The "Taku" will make two round trips per week Ketchikan-Skagway only.

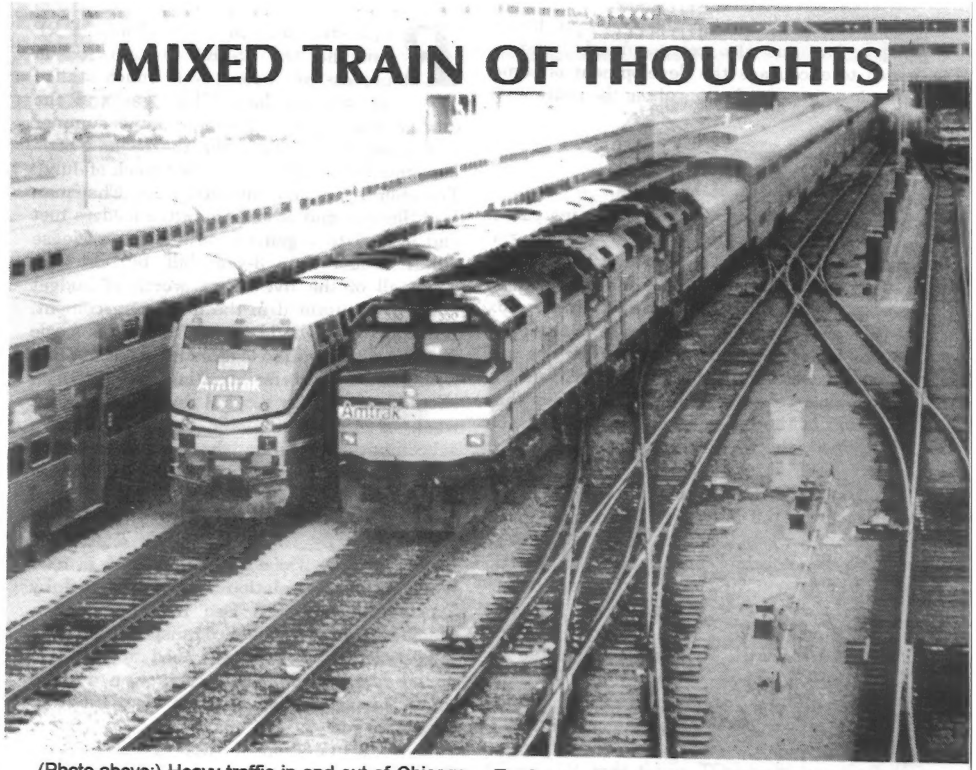
Part of Yakima Interurban trolley line in Selah Gap has been removed for highway expansion. The line will be replaced on a new alignment this fall, so as to allow trolleys to return to Selah in 1998. The 1997 service consists of departures from Pine Street carbarn at 10am, 12 noon, 2pm and 4pm Sat-Sun through mid-October. The 4pm departure is subject to cancellation in very hot weather.

The San Joaquins and **Capitols** are offering a "Fair Deal Package" to the California State Fair in Sacramento from Aug 15 through Sep 1. Involved are trains 722, 714, 727, 711 and 718, with bus connections to and from the Cal Expo fairgrounds. The public info number for the Fair is (916) 263-3000, and fare info is available from Amtrak's 800 number. A blue timecard has been issued with schedules.

Writing in the Portland Oregonian Aug 3, staff reporter Michael Ottey recounted a trip from Victoria BC to Seattle on Easter Sunday (March 30) that happened to be the roughest passage that the crew had ever experienced. The "Victoria Clipper IV" was tossed about by high winds and waves as the passengers, terrified, became ill and prayed. The normal 2-hr crossing took 4hrs, with 1 ½ hrs of that involving the ship taking temporary refuge in a protected harbor. All of the 329 passengers survived. The reporter was pressed into service by the crew to dispense water and seasickness bags.

The Oregon Rail & Transit Advocates (AORTA) in its July bulletin reported that the BNSF line between Portland and Astoria OR was purchased July 16 by Portland & Western RR, a short line owned by Genessee & Wyoming. Said AORTA, "This is good news to businesses and potential patrons along the 92-mile line which reaches from Willbridge in NW Portland to Tongue Point, 3mis east of Astoria. Earlier, BNSF donated to the City of Astoria 5 mis of track between Tongue Point & Astoria."

MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS



(Photo above:) Heavy traffic in and out of Chicago Union Station on April 16, 1997. P40 locomotives (left) are backing in a late-arriving **California Zephyr** as F40s (right) pull out the **Texas Eagle**. Metra commuter equipment is farther to the left. Photo by Bill Hakkarinen.

Media foulups, no. 17,839: On Aug 13 at about 7:10am, KCBS radio in San Francisco reported a truck-train collision on Donner Pass in the Sierra, involving an Amtrak train that had cut a tractor-trailer rig in half, with injuries. There is no Amtrak train scheduled through the area at anywhere near that hour. The train turned out to be a UP freight, and the injured were the truck driver and assistant, who were hurt not by the collision with the train, but by their wild ride off the I-80 freeway and down an embankment onto the tracks. —Gene Poon.

The disappearing F40: The F40 locomotive is now a rarity, reports Jim Langan after extensive Amtrak traveling: "I observed only two at Philadelphia, at the end of a line in the engine terminal behind four P42s (48, 34, 4 and 41). The first two were the **Three Rivers** power, confirmed at Hammond IN the next morning as we passed them on the CSX line east of Hammond waiting for access to Conrail. I saw two more at the Wilmington DE shop: no. 251 at the side of the shop with open engine doors definitely out of service, and no. 385 in front of a shop door. I saw more in Washington at both the station and Ivy City engine terminal, and only two at Chicago's terminal. The numbers were obscured at both Philadelphia and Chicago."

Adds Mr. Langan, "The Washington-Richmond power for train 95, the **Old Dominion**, P42DC #85, was the highest number I have seen in service (as of July 12), although I spotted #86 at Chicago terminal on May 31. All must have been completed by now, as most of the other 80s were reported at Altoona paint shop in May. The final 22 are scheduled for fall delivery and the 21 F59s for spring 1998. With the other eight dual AC-DC power also due in 1998, that should leave only a handful of F40s for backups." But also remember that F40s are now running on the **Coast Starlight**.

A new government was not the only recent innovation for Hong Kong. In May a new north-south rail trunk line opened connecting Hong Kong and Beijing. The 1410-mile trip takes 30 hours for a passenger, the NY Times reported. Previously, it was necessary to change trains in Shenzhen, just over the

Chinese border, making the trip four hours longer. The line also carries freight, and is hoped to encourage the development of some other less-developed areas along the route.

AMTRAK

The Cardinal will lose its dining car in September, and with it will go the enhanced meal service that has been in effect since June 15. Meal selections will revert to tray meals, called "picnic box meals", served on the lower level of the cafe-lounge car. The last day for diner service will be Sep 11 on train 50 and Sep 14 on train 51. (Although as of Aug 15 Arrow still says that operation of the diner after mid-Sep is to be determined, the final dates given above now appear in Arrow menu listings.)

Cant deficiency tests of the Talgo equipment on the Portland OR-Vancouver BC line have been completed (see p. 6). Tests were run on one specific section between Seattle and Vancouver BC, and an overall run between those points was also done to verify overall timing. Similar tests were run between Portland and Seattle and completed on Aug 13. The fastest run between Seattle and Portland was 3hrs, 10mins, compared to 3hrs, 40mins (excluding recovery time) for the current schedules, which are published as 3hrs, 55mins. Amtrak and WashDOT admit that this speed is probably non-sustainable in regular service, which means the total savings in time is less than a half-hour.

WashDOT has also proposed a fourth Portland-Seattle train on a midday schedule, where there is now a 7-hour gap southbound and 7.5 hrs northbound. The equipment would be one of the extra Talgo sets being constructed for future sale, added to the order for WashDOT and Amtrak.

Local TV news on July 23 showed a video of one or two freight locomotives on a bridge falling into the water as the bridge collapsed as a result of heavy storms. We believe this took place in North Carolina. The engines seemed to be on the head of a freight train, and they were seen stationary on the bridge for a few moments before the dramatic collapse. The chronically uninformative and indeed downright stupid regarding railroad matters TV people failed to say what railroad was involved and whether it was a passenger or freight train. The whole thing went by quickly, with the media guys apparently not realizing what dramatic and unusual footage it had in hand. We found nothing else in the news here about the incident.

Reporting on the ISTEA bill, NARP said that the "ISTEA re-authorization process has been pretty much stalled all summer long. That was still the case in the Senate leading into the summer recess that began Aug 2. But there was a little movement in the House [the last week of July]. Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bud Shuster and other committee leaders met and agreed to a general outline for a House bill. It would be a 3-year bill, but drawing down all of the five years' worth of budget authority contained in the budget agreement. It reportedly would retain ISTEA's basic structure. Committee leaders have left staffers with instructions for drafting a bill which should be ready for general review by the last week of August. Shuster hopes to have a subcommittee markup the second week of September, and a full committee markup in the third week. That doesn't leave much time for final enactment in the House, much less the Senate, by ISTEA's Sep 30 expiration. However, there was a similar gap back in 1991 when ISTEA legislation was not signed by President Bush until Dec 18 of that year. Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee need to be told during recess to give states the power to spend some transportation money on intercity passenger rail."

More from NARP on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee: "...Committee member Jay Kim, a Republican from Orange County CA, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor violations of campaign finance. Kim was thought to want the chairmanship of the Railroad Subcommittee, replacing Susan Molinary, who has resigned. Some viewed that with apprehension, as Kim has often said he has no use for Amtrak and that magna-trains and supposedly private-sector highways could do it all. A misdemeanor is not enough to keep Kim from being Railroads Chairman, but the *Journal of Commerce* also has said Kim has said he would not necessarily be guided by party leadership on issues the Subcommittee would face. That could keep him out of the job. The paper also reported that Bob Franks of New Jersey and Jack Quinn of New York are interested in the job."

How True! Department: The Oregon rail advocate group AORTA recalls in its July bulletin a quote from the 1973 book "The Way to Go: The Coming Revival of U.S. Rail Passenger Service", by Thomas C. Southerland Jr and William McCleery: "...though the new age is clearly coming, we are still moving down the old wrong road with tremendous momentum, and there is great profit to many people

(continued on page 20)

Southwest Chief derails in Arizona after flash flood

Amtrak train 4, the eastbound **Southwest Chief**, derailed at about 5am on Aug 9 in the Arizona desert three miles east of the Kingman AZ airport. The train, with 307 passengers and a crew of 18, was traveling at 88mph in a 90mph zone. The engineer reportedly slowed the train somewhat by emergency braking when he saw a disturbance to the track ahead.

The consist of the train was: four P42 engines (47, 50, 80 & 52), baggage 1240, Superliner II transition dorm sleeper 39007, Superliner II coach 34133, Superliner I coaches 34096 & 34060, Superliner I smoking coach 31501, Superliner II lounge 33036, Superliner I diner 38017, Superliner I sleeper 32051, Superliner II sleeper 32088 "Maryland" and material-handling cars 1526, 1564, 1428, 1556, 1420 and 1563. The third engine and succeeding cars derailed, except for the material-handling cars. One report said the fourth engine separated from the three in front and tipped over, pulling the next car or two with it. (Some reports gave 1254 as the baggage car on the train; these reports came off Amtrak's computer as the official consist, but apparently car 1240 was substituted for 1254.)

The cause of the derailment was a flash flood earlier in the morning, which washed out some support of a small wooden trestle over a normally dry wash. The weight of the train caused the bridge to buckle, derailing the train. The wash is only five or six feet deep. When the train came to rest. sleeper 32088 was left straddling the wash. The width of the wash was about half the length of a Superliner car.

The bridge had been inspected by railroad crew just 2 ½ hours before the accident. A flash flood warning had been in effect, as there was heavy rain and wind in the area, starting at about 1am. (After the accident, the BNSF railroad ruled that during flash flood warning times passenger train speed will be set at 20mph and freight train speed at 40mph.)

Most of the injured passengers had minor injuries, but one was listed in critical condition. There were no fatalities. An early report from Reuters erroneously reported eight fatalities. There were wildly conflicting reports initially on the number of injured and the severity of the accident. On ABC affiliate Channel 7 in San Francisco, a reporter standing in front of the train spoke of the "crumpled and crushed" cars, although there was no crumpling nor crushing visible on the screen. Primarily, the train was fairly in line, with two cars jackknifed out—the smoking coach and the lounge.

A group of 30 Boy Scouts were riding the train. They were uninjured, and they used their Scout preparedness skills to help passengers who were injured. Rescue workers had to use four-wheel drive vehicles to reach the train, though it was just 150 feet from Highway 66, reports said.

Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said that 153 people were treated, and 14 admitted to hospitals, with one in critical condition. Passengers were sheltered at a junior high school in Kingman.

The two-track line was shut down by the accident, and one track was reopened at 10am the following day. Investigators were studying the accident, but all evidence pointed to a sudden one-inch rainfall in the area as the culprit.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Sheryl Buford, 50, of Bakersfield, Calif., was in the smoking car downstairs. 'All of the sudden,' she recalled, 'it started skidding and we got thrown around. One woman was screaming, and we couldn't breathe...'"

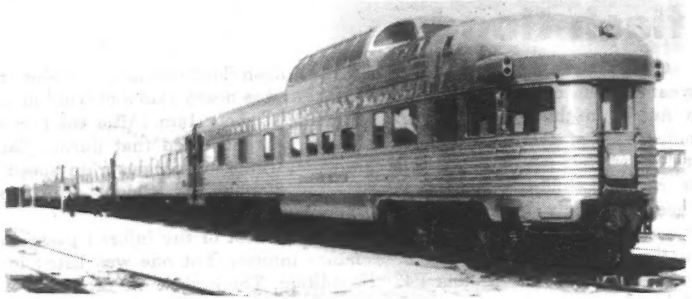
—From New York Times report on the Aug 9 **Southwest Chief** derailment.
(Maybe she should give up smoking.)

Reporting on the same derailment, NBC affiliate channel 4 in Denver said on the evening news that "the Amtrak train" which derailed in Arizona was headed for Grand Junction and La Junta in Colorado (on the 10pm news on Aug 9).—Bob Rynerson.
(An unlikely route for the **Southwest Chief.**)

VIA Rail's *Canadian*—Queen of the Rails

By Jack M. Turner

In part two of this series, RTN correspondent Jack Turner and his family travel from Toronto to Vancouver aboard VIA Rail Canada's Canadian.



The westbound **Canadian** pauses for servicing at Edmonton on June 7, with dome "Strathcona Park" carrying the markers. Photos by the author.

A sunny day greets us as we exit the lavish Royal York Hotel on Thursday, June 5, cross Front Street, and make our way into magnificent Toronto Union Station. In a reversal of roles from the previous night's arrival in Toronto, a Royal York bellman transports our luggage to the station where it is handed over to an eager redcap who escorts us to our train.

Union Station was built in 1927 as a joint venture of competitors Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways. The main hall contains a high arched ceiling supported by massive pillars. Within this hall stand VIA Rail Canada's ticket windows, baggage check counter, and assorted gift, snack, and money exchange shops. The station's grandeur is a fitting place to begin a transcontinental trip aboard North America's finest passenger train.

Stepping onto the platform we are amazed by the length of the **Canadian**, which stretches as far as one can see in either direction. Since our sleeping accommodations are in the rear car, we have quite a hike to our car which pokes out of the east end of the trainshed. As we stroll down the platform, the names of some of the sleeping cars - Douglas Manor, Wolfe Manor, and Chateau Papineau - invite me to learn more about Canadian history. Later I discover that James Douglas was both a principal of the Hudson's Bay Company and colonial governor of Vancouver Island in the late 1850s, General James Wolfe was a British officer who led that nation's army up the St. Lawrence River in 1759 to capture Quebec City from the French, and Louis Joseph Papineau was the leader of a Canadian rebellion in 1837. Sleeping cars used on the **Canadian** belong either to the Manor series, named for famous English Canadians, or the Chateau series, named for important French Canadians.

Today's **Canadian** consists of two locomotives and 19 cars of which 11 are sleepers. There are four dome cars so there should be few problems obtaining the coveted seats under glass whenever we want a bird's eye view of the Canadian countryside. These dome cars are intended for sleeping car passengers, known in VIA terminology as Silver & Blue class.

After the long hike, car attendant Walter Krawec welcomes us aboard the "Strathcona Park", a scenic dome observation sleeper built for the Canadian Pacific in 1955. Like most of the cars on this train, the "Strathcona Park" saw most of its service time on the CPR's transcontinental **Canadian** until 1978 when VIA Rail Canada assumed operation of most of Canada's long distance passenger trains.

The dome observation cars contain three bedrooms at the forward end followed by a drawing room; the Mural Lounge, where one can engage in a card game, watch a movie, or purchase beverages; and the Bullet Lounge, where comfortable seats line the round end of the bullet-shaped observation section. Wait-listing our name with VIA had paid off as two months before our trip, the drawing room became available. As many staff members noted, ours was the best room on the train as it contained two lower and one upper berth by night and a full length sofa plus movable reclining chair by day plus a huge picture window to view the passing scenery. Best of all, it was the closest room on the train to both the Bullet Lounge and dome seating above.

Right on cue at 11:00a.m. the **Canadian**'s twin F40 locomotives tug our streamliner forward. The stately Royal York Hotel stands to our right just beyond the station but quickly disappears as we enter Union Station's cavernous trainshed. Exiting the station, CN Tower and Skydome are passed as first call for lunch is made. Meals are included in the fare for Silver & Blue passengers.

The **Canadian** takes a circuitous route through Toronto's suburbs, heading northwesterly to Parkdale on Canadian National Railway's Weston Subdivision then northward to Snider on the Newmarket Sub where it crosses a doubletracked east-west line that allows freight to bypass downtown Toronto. Soon we back up on a connector track that places us on the York Sub pointing east. A passing Canadian National freight yields to us as we re-cross the diamond at Snider eight minutes after our first passage. After heading east for seven miles, we turn north at Doncaster onto the Bala Sub that will take us along the east side of massive Lake Simcoe.

Until earlier this year the eastbound Canadian typically used the Bala Sub east of the lake while the westbound train followed the less-used Newmarket Sub along the western shore. This process precluded turning the train in Toronto between runs. The pending abandonment of the Newmarket Sub between Barrie and Longford forced the **Canadian** to take the line east of Lake Simcoe in both directions, thus the roundabout eastbound routing was needed to avoid having to turn the train. The eastbound **Canadian**, on the other hand, continues to follow the Bala Sub all the way into Toronto.

A delicious lunch of vegetable lasagna, salad, and a lemon bar is enjoyed in the lower level of Skyline car 8509 which is but four cars ahead of the "Strathcona Park". There is a Skyline car for every three or four sleeping cars so Silver & Blue passengers can dine at their pleasure without lengthy waits. The regular dining car, meanwhile, has been moved to the forward part of the train for the busy summer season to service the meal requirements of coach riders.

Our skyline car contains six tables seating a total of 24, one half the capacity of a standard dining car. A small kitchen and pantry are located in the center of the car and a lounge section contains mostly unused tables at the forward end of the car. Upstairs is the 24 seat dome section which is a great place to pass the time after meals before heading back to the Park car.

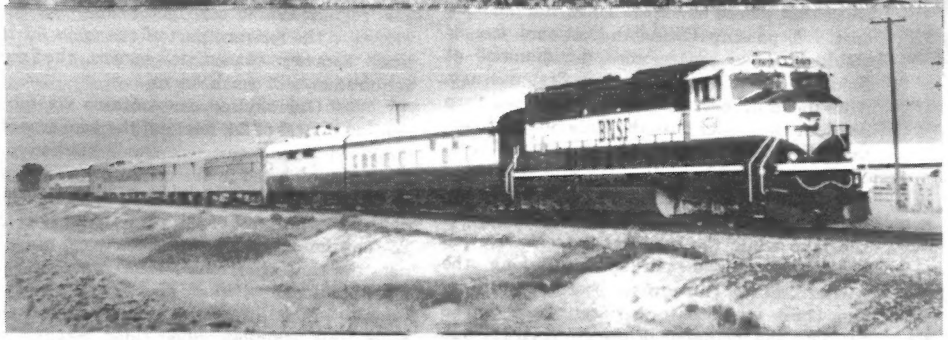
Like all of the other cars on this train, this stainless silver-sided Skyline car was used on CPR's original **Canadian**. In

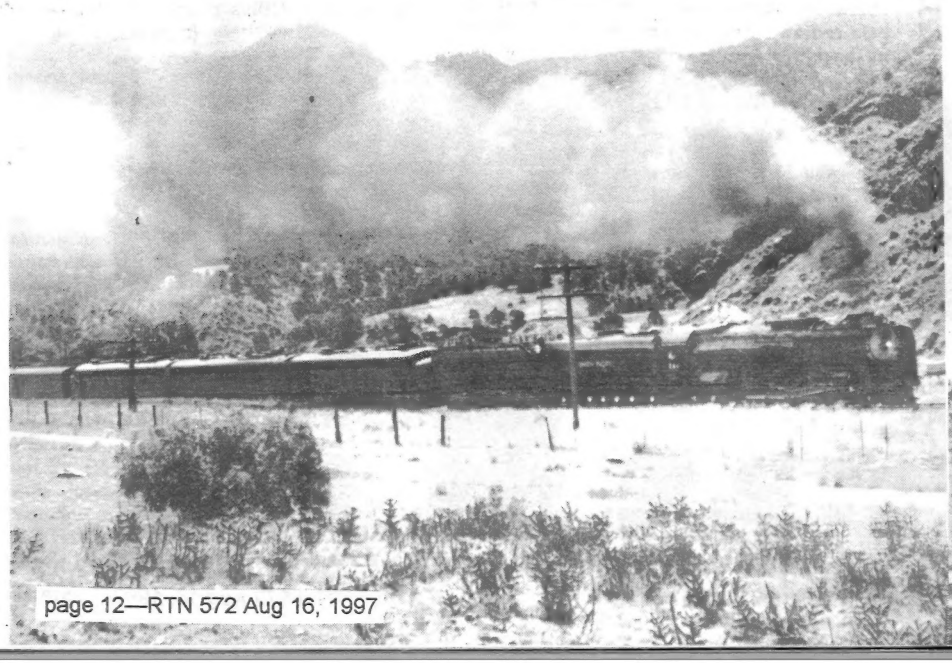
(continued on page 15)

Passengers enjoy breakfast in Skyline car 8509 as steward "John" oversees service.

A Summer of Specials

Text & photos by Alex Mayes





Page 12, top: The Union Pacific ran a steam special between Salt Lake City and Cache Junction UT on June 28, the last day of the 1997 NRHS Convention, which was based in Salt Lake City. The power for this steam extra was their huge 4-8-4 No. 844, now painted in an all-black freight scheme. The consist was 18 cars, including six domes. The train originated at the UP station in Salt Lake and proceeded north on the UP main to Cache Junction, where the entire train was turned on the wye. Then a photo runby was held just south of Cache Junction at milepost 48. The train then proceeded directly back to Salt Lake. This photo was taken at Honeyville UT as the steam special was en route to Cache Junction.

Page 12, middle: The BNSF operated a special passenger train for their employees over a 4500-mile route through eight states during June. The train was operated by BNSF senior management to express gratitude for the extraordinary efforts made by employees during the merger process of the BN and the Santa Fe. The BNSF "Employee Appreciation Special" was scheduled to be powered by ex-Frisco 4-8-2 No. 1522; however, that engine experienced some overheated bearing problems and was replaced by BNSF diesels.

The trip originated in Kansas City MO on June 2 and headed west through Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming, then north through Montana, where the train was on display at Laurel June 12. On June 13 the passenger special headed south to Gillette WY and then east back through Nebraska, and made a two-day trip north to Sioux City IA from Lincoln NE and back. The final leg of the trip was from Omaha to Galesburg IL, where the train participated in the Railroad Days festival at Galesburg June 28-29.

The train was made up of cars from the BN's and Santa Fe's historical collection: BNA #22, sleeper "Stevens Pass; BNA #30, HEP power car "Snoqualmie Pass"; ATSF #67, sleeper "Regal Manor"; ATSF #77, baggage car; ATSF #62, lounge car; ATSF #61, diner "Fred Harvey"; ATSF #60, full-length dome-lounge; BNA #32, bilevel coach-lounge "Flathead River"; BNA #33, bilevel coach-lounge "Skagit River"; BNA #31, bilevel lounge "Fox River"; BNSF #24, full-length dome-diner-theater car "Glacier View".

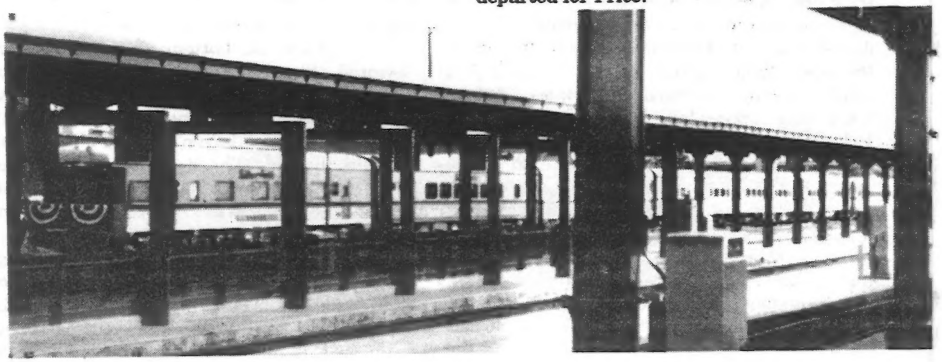
This photo was taken on June 13 as the "Employee Appreciation Special" was southbound on the former CB&Q, passing through Hardin MT. The power for this day's trip was BNSF SD70MAC No. 9751.

Page 12, bottom: A special steam-powered, three-day excursion was operated by the Union Pacific from Denver to Salt Lake City June 21-23 over some portions of freight-only trackage that haven't hosted a passenger train in 30 years. The steam special consisted of 18 cars, all Armour Yellow, and included six domes! The power was UP's 4-8-4 No. 844 and their immaculately restored A-B-A set of E9s.

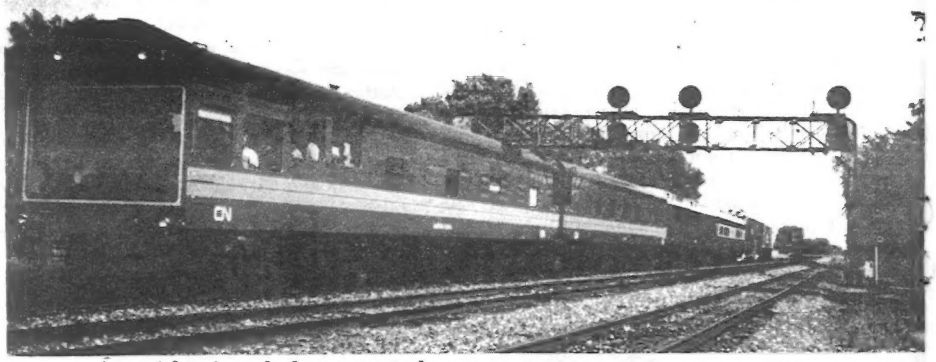
The train, named the "Royal Gorge Steam Special", originated at Denver Union Station on June 21 and headed south down the "Joint Line" to Pueblo. The last passenger train on this line was on April 30, 1971, the day before the startup of Amtrak. The train was the Santa Fe's connection to the **Super Chief** between La Junta and Denver. At Pueblo, the steam special transferred to the former Denver and Rio Grande Western's famed Tennessee Pass Line and headed west as far as Canon City CO, the first day's destination. The following morning the train continued west, going through the 1300-foot deep Royal Gorge about 10 miles west of Canon City, and then climbed 10,212-foot Tennessee Pass, the highest railroad mountain pass in the U.S. At Dotsero, where the Tennessee Pass ends, the steam special transferred onto the Moffat Line and proceeded west to Grand Junction, the second day's destination. The following morning the steam special continued west over the former D&RGW main, arriving at Salt Lake City at 7:30pm. This photo was taken on the second day of the trip during the photo runby at Texas Creek CO, at milepost 184 on the Tennessee Pass Line.

Page 13: The Union Pacific ran a special passenger train for their coal custom-

ers between Salt Lake City and Price UT, over the former D&RGW/SP main on June 26. The power for the passenger extra was their A-B-A set of E9 diesels, resplendent in fresh Armour Yellow livery. The consist was all UP cars, which included one HEP/power car, dome "Challenger", coach "Texas Eagle", dome "Columbine" and dome "City of San Francisco". The train originated at the UP station in Salt Lake and headed south down the former D&RGW main to Provo UT, where a stop was made to pick up passengers. From Provo, the train headed east directly to Price. After a brief layover in Price, the train returned to Salt Lake via the same routing. This photo is of the passenger extra at Provo just before it departed for Price.



On June 21 Hillary Clinton hosted the wives of the world leaders who were attending the G8 conference in Denver, aboard a special passenger train. The G8 spouses and Mrs. Clinton boarded the train at Denver Union Station and then headed west over the former D&RGW's Moffat Line to Winter Park CO. At Winter Park the passengers detrained and boarded the famous Zephyr Chair Lift and ascended to the Sunspot Lodge restaurant for lunch. After lunch they returned to Denver via the same routing. The train used the equipment of the Rio Grande's **Ski Train**, and consisted of nine cars, including one dome. The power for the special were GP60s 5838 and 5842, formerly SP and now painted in UP Armour Yellow. The photo above is of Hillary's special train preparing to leave Denver. The last car, a platform obs, is decked out in red, white and blue bunting for the occasion.



A special train racked up some truly rare mileage July 20. Operated by Metra on behalf of the Association of Railroad Superintendents, the passenger extra left Metra's "Zephyr House" at Canal & Roosevelt in Chicago at 1:30pm, scheduled to return at 5:30. In the consist were a Metra F40 and bilevel coach, Wisconsin Central open-platform business cars "Algoma" and "Prairie Rose", CN staff car "Verendyre" and CN theater car "Sir Sanford Fleming". The train went southwest on the old GM&O to the Belt Rwy at Lemoyne Ave, west and south into and through Clearing Yard, east through Hayford Jct on the Belt to the Conrail main at the Calumet River, east on CR to Osborn, then west on the Indiana Harbor Belt to Congress Park and back downtown on the BN. In the photo the special is just east of Hammond/Whiting. Photo and caption by Stan Brandt.

VIA Rail's *Canadian* (continued from page 11)

their original configuration the Skyline cars contained a coffee shop serving economical meals at one end and 26 reserved coach seats at the opposite end of the car. The coach seats were removed long ago but the dining room was recently redecorated to match the discerning tastes of Silver & Blue passengers. Green carpeting and pale green accents give the dining room a comfortable look while a framed classic Canadian Pacific poster graces the bulkhead. Tables, meanwhile, are covered with crisp linen tablecloths that are carefully changed after each use.

Two hours north of Toronto we follow the shore of Lake Simcoe for a few miles and it is evident that this lake is a popular summer getaway for Ontario residents as attractive cottages line its banks. At Washago the route used by Ontario Northland's **Northlander** to Cochrane bears off to the right as we curve to the left and cross a swing bridge over the Atherley Narrows at the north end of Lake Couchiching. The narrows are part of the Trent-Severn Waterway, a 240 mile system of rivers and lakes connecting Lake Ontario with Georgian Bay.

The CNR route will continue in a generally northwesterly direction for the next five hours as it passes numerous lakes including Sparrow Lake, Lake Muskoka, and Lake Joseph. This region is better known as the Canadian Shield, a land of granite rock outcroppings stretching from the Great Lakes to Hudson Bay. This rock was shaped by ancient glaciers . which also dug out depressions that today comprise many of Ontario's 250,000 lakes. Throughout this stretch of the trip the **Canadian** pierces its way through many rock cuts where towering granite rocks loom above and beside the track like sentinels sent to guard the railway.

Despite the barren surroundings, the shores of Lake Joseph are popular as modest cottages along this lake sell for approximately one-half million Canadian dollars. Most of these homes have boathouses on the lake to take advantage of the short Ontario summer. Before long the Canadian Pacific line from Toronto makes intermittent appearances on the left as we near Parry Sound, a town of 6,000 people located on its namesake body of water which, in turn, connects with Georgian Bay.

North of Parry Sound the **Canadian** traverses an even more sparsely populated region dominated by even more granite rock, sparkling lakes, and deep woodlands bordered by white three-petal flowers known as trilliums. Dinnertime comes promptly at 5:00pm and we enjoy a delicious roasted pork in mango sauce, carrots, broccoli, beef consomme, and blueberry cheesecake accompanied by refreshing lemon flavored iced tea. Dinner each night will be by reservation so that the Skyline car's 24 seats efficiently serve the four rear sleeping cars. We find that our meals are leisurely rather than rushed and we enjoy the quiet elegance exuded by dinners aboard the **Canadian.**

The crew of our Skyline dining room, John, Jan, and Nadine, are a pleasant trio of young people employed by VIA Rail during the busy summer seasons. Like all on-board service personnel, they work as far as their home base, Winnipeg, then are replaced by another crew for the trip to Vancouver. When summer ends they will return to university before hopefully rejoining VIA next year.

While we partake of dinner, the eastbound **Canadian** passes and many of the dining staff from both trains exchange pleasantries from the vestibules. It occurs that this is due to the enthusiasm of youth much like that seen once upon a time on the private **Auto-Train** in the United States. This is a refreshing change from the "just a job" attitude seen on many trains south of the Canadian border. Unfortunately, this will be the only meet with our eastbound counterpart that we will witness, as the other two passages will take place while we sleep.

Approaching Sudbury, the railway is bounded by gigantic heaps of black slag as well as nickel mines. The Canadian Pacific main line from Montreal is crossed just after 6:20pm and ten minutes later we stop at the Sudbury Jct station. Capreol is reached 20 minutes later and passengers are encouraged to detrain and stretch their legs during this 30 minute stop. Former CN steam locomotive 6077, preserved just east of the Capreol depot is a reminder of a bygone era in North American railroading.

The mere presence of the **Canadian** on this route is a contradiction of this land's passenger train heritage, as the **Canadian** was the flagship of rival Canadian Pacific from its introduction in 1955 until the coming of VIA Rail Canada in the late 1970s. Even after VIA took over, the **Canadian** retained its original CPR routing between Sudburv and Vancouver until the beginning of this decade when it was shifted to the more northerly CNR line that we follow today.

Much has been written about the loss of passenger service along the scenic shores of Lake Superior as well as the majestic CP route through the Canadian Rockies; however, as my wife Christine states, "This is a great route through Ontario with all of the lakes, rivers, and other sights." Indeed the scenery is great but this trip already has more going for it as the **Canadian** is much like a cruise ship as it has a relaxing pace about it that invites passengers to unwind. Throughout the journey the train will make steady westward progress yet not at a breakneck speed that makes rest difficult. Instead, the gentle rocking of this train will result in three restful nights and a couple of well-placed afternoon naps.

We follow the Vermilion River for a number of miles and my son John takes pleasure in spotting numerous beaver dams in the winding river. Many birch trees in this area are missing bark for a few feet above the ground, a likely sign of beaver activity. This region is so remote that flag stops such as McKee's Camp don't even appear on the official Ontario provincial map. In addition to the forests, this part of Ontario is dotted with watery bogs better known as muskeg.

The dome car is filled with passengers enjoying a beautiful sunset reflecting off Donnegana Lake near Westree. Purple, pink, and orange hues dominate the sky and the silver-sided train cars ahead reflect the sun like some kind of neon snake. Something about this train seems to encourage her riders to speak in hushed tones as if in a cathedral or a library and this atmosphere adds to the elegant feeling evoked by the **Canadian**.

Darkness finally sets in at about 10:00pm which is evidence that we are moving farther north in latitude. In fact, during this day we have traveled from approximately 44 degrees north lattitude at Toronto to 48 degrees north at Foleyet. Overnight we will continue our northwestward trek before leveling off at 50 degrees north at Nakina where our route will head west.

Following eight solid hours of sleep we arise at Mud River at 7:51 in the morning. My only regret is that I slept through the stop at Hornepayne, one of this train's two most colorfully named stops, a distinction shared with Saskatoon. As we enjoy pancakes, bacon, and cantaloupe for breakfast in the Skyline car, the train passes from the eastern to the central time zone between Armstrong and Collins. Amazingly, we are still deep within Ontario as the expansive province measures 1,000 miles across (east to west) and 1,044 miles from north to south. The **Canadian** will have traversed over 1,800 kilometers (a fraction over 1,100 miles) in its 28-hour trek through Ontario.

Back in the "Strathcona Park" many passengers are enjoying the Continental breakfast that our car attendant Walter has set out in the Bullet Lounge. Thirty-two years of working aboard CP and VIA passenger trains has not dulled the enthusiasm of Winnipeg native Walter who tells me that he waited tables in the dining and Skyline cars before settling in as a sleeping car attendant. His pride in his work is evident as our room has been thoroughly cleaned and the beds neatly stowed into the wall while we were at breakfast.

A mid-morning stop at Sioux Lookout allows time to photograph the train beside the white English Tudor-style depot that is rundown on the inside. West of town we cross sparkling Pelican Lake as a seaplane takes off to our left. By lunch time the railway passes through several granite rock cuts and follows Canyon Lake for over 20 minutes. A bald eagle soars above the lake and lands atop a tree as passengers in the dome grab their camcorders. Our fellow travelers in the Park car hail from Scotland, Germany, Canada and the United States and most are either traveling to Vancouver or Jasper.

The day's most memorable scene is perhaps that of a woman in a two-piece outfit mowing her lawn in the tiny hamlet of Ottermere, totally oblivious to the passing train, while a little girl wearing cowboy boots runs through the yard waving at us, and the family dog sits attentively watching the train. This is the type of scene one might expect to see in a Canadian version of a Norman Rockwell painting.

Twenty minutes beyond Ottermere the **Canadian** crosses the border into Manitoba. We have traveled through Ontario for 29 hours. The scenery in this province offers a sharp contrast to Ontario as the land consists, in large part, of flat prairie lands and the railway follows mostly tangent track. There are numerous small towns along the railroad and most have a trackside grain elevator displaying the name of the town on its side.

Two hours into Manitoba we cross the swollen Red River which spills slightly over its banks just a month after devastating flooding to the south in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The train makes a sweeping curve to the left and pulls under the trainshed at Winnipeg's green domed Union Station which was built in 1911. The crew advises that this will be a one-hour servicing stop and passengers are encouraged to detrain. We bid farewell to Walter, Jan, Nadine, and John as we set out for a walk to the Forks Market across the street from the depot. The market contains shops selling fresh fruits, baked goods, and assorted artwork and souvenirs.

The city of Winnipeg has a population of 600,000 and is the parliamentary capital of Manitoba. This location was named "Winni-nipi", meaning "muddy water", by the Cree Indians, an appropriate name since it stands at the forks of the Red, Assiniboine and Seine rivers. This location made Winnipeg a key starting point for European fur traders in the era when the region was first being explored by people other than the native Indians. In modern times, Winnipeg stands as a transportation hub funneling Canadian Pacific and Canadian National tracks from east to west while various other lines fan out in all directions like the spokes on a wheel.

The **Canadian**'s stay in Winnipeg has extended to 90 minutes as the task of servicing the 19-car train and washing the windows takes quite awhile. The front windows in the "Strathcona Park" are again clear as the cleaning crew has washed and scrubbed away the road grime that had splattered the glass. As the train eases forward I note that the dome seems to fit under the trainshed by a matter of inches.

Canadian Pacific
THE WORLD'S LONGEST
SCENIC DOME
Ride

The Western service manager for our train, Maurice, stops by and introduces himself to dome car passengers and tells us that our lateness is just an illusion, as the schedule is "flexible". The passengers laugh at his joke; nobody is in a big hurry as this is a land cruise. Momentarily, the new dining car steward makes the first call for dinner, so we head off to the Skyline car. We welcome the fact that a member of the dining staff always announces meal sittings in person rather than by using the intercom. Throughout the entire trip the intercom is sparingly used and these veteran Amtrak riders are glad.

The first part of dinner is enjoyed while we stand just beyond the Winnipeg station waiting for three CN freights to pass. At least seven freights have passed since we first arrived in Winnipeg. My succulent dinner consists of beef tenderloin served in a red wine sauce, carrots, broccoli, a baked potato, soup, and salad. The other entrees are Cornish game hen and cornet of Manitoba pickerel. Dinners aboard the Canadian generally follow this pattern, offering a choice of one beef, one poultry, and one seafood entree.

While we enjoy dessert, flocks of Canadian geese can be seen in newly planted grain fields outside our window. The scenery again consists mostly of prairie lands and small towns with the standard grain elevators. At Portage La Prairie the CP train station stands approximately 50 yards to the north of the CN station where we are stopped. This town's interesting name reflects the French heritage of many of the fur traders who rested here during their overland treks carrying their canoes between the Assiniboine River and Lake Manitoba to the north.

The last vestiges of twilight still are visible at 10:45pm as I enjoy solitude in the dome car. For 30 minutes the headlight of a westbound freight train can be seen a few miles behind us as we ply the arrow-straight rails through western Manitoba. With regret I leave my thought-provoking perch and turn in for another restful night in our drawing room .Overnight the train follows the Qu' Appelle Valley, which can be seen in daylight on the eastbound run.

Saturday June 7 dawns to find us traveling through the province of Saskatchewan. This is our third day aboard the **Canadian** and will definitely be remembered as the highlight. While we slept we missed colorfully named Saskatoon but the names of towns such as Biggar, Unity, and Viking make up for this. East of Wainwright we enter Alberta, our fourth province of the trip. Just beyond Wainwright the CN line carries us across a spectacular tall trestle over the Battle River Valley. The dome and the Bullet Lounge sections of the Park car offer sweeping vistas of the deep valley, green hills, and the river below.

The rural scenery gives way to oil refineries as .the impressive skyline of Edmonton looms ahead. This city of 850,000 is the fourth provincial capital that we have passed through on the **Canadian**. Like most of the other cities at which we have stopped, Edmonton was traditionally served by Canadian National passenger trains until the late 1970s. In the years leading up to VIA Rail's takeover of passenger services, the flagship of the CNR was the **Super Continental** which connected Montreal and Toronto with Edmonton and Vancouver. Eventually under VIA operation the former CN streamliner was afforded secondary status behind the **Canadian** and, at various times, truncated to serve only the western leg of the CN line. Fortunes shifted for cities along the Canadian

National in the early 1990s when the **Canadian** was shifted to the northerly CN line.

To reach the Edmonton station the **Canadian** must diverge from the CNR mainline and follow a branch line downtown. This 10 minute side trip from East Jct. to downtown Edmonton is interesting as it parallels the city's light rail transit line and passes the homes of ice hockey's Edmonton Oilers, football's Edmonton Eskimos, and baseball's AAA Edmonton Trappers.

Since we are over an hour late, our stop is shortened to just 45 minutes. Initial reports indicated that four more sleeping cars and another Skyline car would be added here; however, today's early season load is light so the extra cars will wait until next week to operate.

After backing out to the main line, the **Canadian** continues its westward march toward the mountains. The very busy Edmonton Airport stands adjacent to the railway just west of the city, while a huge rail yard dominates the view on the opposite side of the tracks. In the Mural Lounge, our car attendant offers Chris and John a choice of movies and they select "Fly Away Home", a story of a family who helps relocate wayward Canadian geese.

By midafternoon we are definitely climbing as we approach Edson and cross tall trestles over Wolf Creek and the McLeod River. Another tall bridge traverses Sundance Creek and then we catch our first glimpse of the Rockies. The mountains draw closer and closer for the next 90 minutes until Park Gate where we enter Jasper National Park and follow the beautiful Athabasca River toward Jasper.

Snow-capped mountains envelop the train as it winds its way through the Athabasca River Valley. Each curve reveals a scene more spectacular than the last as the tracks navigate their way between the Bosche Range and Miette Range that are part of the system of mountain ranges comprising the Canadian Rockies. Particularly scenic views occur along the shores of Brule Lake near Black Cat Mountain and along Jasper Lake a few miles to the west.

The **Canadian** eases to a stop in Jasper at 4:47pm and passengers again are offered the chance to stretch their legs while the train is serviced. Chris, John, and I take a stroll around Jasper's neat, compact downtown area which is centered across the street from the train station. The depot is an attractive structure and houses Brewster bus tours, National/Tilden rental cars, and a local travel agency in addition to VIA Rail Canada and Rocky Mountaineer Railtours ticket counters. Mountains surround the town in the kind of scene one usually sees only in travel brochures.

A former CN steam engine, #6015, is displayed at the west side of the station grounds while the east side of the station is flanked by a totem pole and child-sized replica steam engine. A wash crew carefully cleans all of the **Canadian's** windows, and a pair of mechanized cherry pickers lift cleaning personnel to the dome level of the Skyline and Park cars so that the dome windows can be scrubbed as well. Soon the **Skeena** arrives from Prince George, turns on a wye and stops just a few feet behind the "Strathcona Park".

We are underway again after the one hour stop and we're glad that we will be returning to Jasper in two weeks. The scenery continues to draw "oohs" and "ahhs" from delighted dome car riders as the railway follows the Miette River to Yellowhead Pass, summit of the **Canadian's** passage through the magnificent Rockies. Yellowhead Pass, at 3,718 feet elevation, is one of North America's lowest passes over the Continental Divide, yet the scenery is breathtaking with rivers east of the pass flowing to the Arctic Ocean and waters to the west eventually reaching the Pacific.

Yellowhead Pass also marks the border between Alberta and British Columbia as well as the point at which we enter the Pacific Time Zone. Starting down the west side of the pass, we join the shore of beautiful Yellowhead Lake which graces the south side of the tracks for several miles. Mt. Rockingham, elevation 7,797 feet, and Mt. Fitzwilliam, elevation 9,549 feet,, stand majestically behind the lake which reflects their snow capped peaks in its glacier-fed green water.

Twenty minutes later the **Canadian** joins the shore of stunning Moose Lake which is resplendent with the Selwyn Range rising behind it. Yellowhead and Moose lakes are connected by the Fraser River, which we will rejoin on our journey in the morning east of Vancouver.

Redpass, just beyond Moose Lake, is the point where CN's lines to Vancouver and Prince Rupert officially separate. However, when the milepost numbers beside the track correspond with the Robson Subdivision which is part of the **Skeena** route to Prince Rupert, I :ksk the conductor what's going on. It turns out that the lines parallel one another for 20 miles to Taverna where a connector track allows the routes to be used interchangeably. Between Redpass and Taverna, Mt. Robson (highest peak in the Canadian Rockies at 12,972 feet) is visible on the right. About 90% of the snow-covered mountain is visible today below the clouds, which is far better than most days, according to the train's crew.

Our dinner seating is called just as we have passed Mt. Robson but I steal one last glimpse of the mountain out the rear window of the Bullet Lounge. The effort is worthwhile as the towering mountain appears to stand at the end of the tracks that we have just traversed. Dinner once again is delicious as each of us enjoy the veal chop with a dutchess potato and zucchini.

The long summer days are appreciated as we pass 300 foot tall Pyramid Falls at 7:40pm. Maurice, the service manager, gives everyone ample warning to prepare their cameras and the engineer slows the train to about 5 m.p.h. to allow a good look. The falls are so close to the track that the crashing sound of cascading water is clearly audible and the spray hits the side of the train.

The sun plays hide and seek behind the Shuswap Highlands to the west as we twist along a high shelf overlooking the roaring North Thompson River at 8:45pm. Far below, the turbulent river pounds through Gates of Hell Canyon. We have been headed due south since Taverna and will continue in this direction until Kamloops North. For one last time we turn in for the night as the **Canadian** twists and turns through the British Columbia darkness.

We are running 75 minutes late when we arise at Hope, a small town located on the south shore of the Fraser River. We enjoy one final meal aboard the **Canadian's** Skyline car and bid farewell to our charming servers Amanda and Monique. The train leaves the Canadian National at Matsqui Jct. and crosses the Fraser River into Mission City. Finally, the **Canadian** is on its historic Canadian Pacific route, albeit for only 40 miles. We join Burlington Northern-Santa Fe tracks near Burnaby for a brief 20 minutes then back up on tracks owned by VIA Rail into Vancouver's Pacific Central Station. Arrival is at 9:25am, only 30 minutes late.

A cherry picker device allows a worker to clean dome car windows at the stop at Jasper.

Reservations and information for the **Canadian** may be made by calling VIA Rail Canada at (800)561-3949 or on the world wide web at: http://www.viarail.ca. Excellent reading about the route of the **Canadian** is available in: "Enchanting Horizons", published by VIA Rail Canada in 1995, and "Scenic Rail Guide to Western Canada", by Bill Coo, 1989.

Vancouver is one of North America's finest cities as it offers activities to suit the wishes of almost any visitor. The Greater Vancouver area sports a population of 1.8 million people coming from a wide range of ethnic groups. Pleasant temperatures are generally the rule and our visit is no exception with daytime outings requiring a light sweater.

In keeping with our travel aboard the **Canadian**, we have selected Hotel Vancouver for tonight's stay. Hotel Vancouver was established in 1887 by the Canadian Pacific Railway and has twice been replaced by newer structures. Today's Hotel Vancouver was constructed in 1939 and completely renovated in 1996. At the time of its opening, the French Renaissance style hotel was the city's tallest building. Through the years the hotel has hosted many dignitaries ranging from heads of state to giants of the entertainment industry. The magnificent hotel lobby is inviting and even includes a Canadian Pacific Store that sells merchandise related both to CP hotels and its former passenger trains. Guest rooms and suites are tastefully decorated in the elegant style of the Canadian Pacific. A large indoor pool is perfect for swimming laps and the midtown location is convenient for sightseeing. Hotel Vancouver reservations can be made by calling (800) 441-1414.

As there is much to see in Vancouver, we have rented a car from the Avis downtown location on Hornby Street. This location is in the Hotel Vancouver complex and offers courtesy service to and from the VIA Rail station as well as downtown cruise ship terminals.

Among the sights that we enjoy during this visit and two subsequent returns to Vancouver in the coming weeks, our favorite is 1,000-acre Stanley Park. An excellent way to begin a visit to the park is to ride a horse-drawn carriage operated by AAA Horse & Carriage Ltd. The one hour narrated tour gives us insight into the history and highlights of this popular urban park.

Another highlight of Stanley Park is Vancouver Aquarium which features whales, dolphins, sharks, and a wide array of exotic fish. Whale shows are held at selected times

during the day. There also are miles of hiking and biking trails throughout Stanley Park as well as ball fields where cricket matches are held. Lovely rose gardens add an aromatic touch to one corner of the park which is situated alongside the harbor serving ocean-going ships, seaplanes and pleasure craft .

Another excellent attraction is Science World, a hands-on science center built on the site of a past World Expo. Science World especially appeals to children and is located within walking distance of Pacific Central Station and is also served by Skytrain, Vancouver's rapid transit system. Nearby is Chinatown where restaurants and shopping attract many visitors. This is the third largest Chinatown in North America. Another interesting area is Gastown, where old factories and other buildings have been restored into restaurants and shops. A working steam clock at the corner of Cambie and Water Streets is the centerpiece of Gastown.

Popular Alaska cruises sail from ultra-modern Canada Place, just a few blocks from Hotel Vancouver. The CN IMAX Theatre at Canada Place offers interesting big screen films about subjects such as Alaska, The Titanic, and the Northern Lights. Nearby there are numerous other museums and art galleries to visit as well as boat tours and exciting day trips to Victoria, Seattle, Whistler, and the Fraser River Canyon. For more information about Vancouver, contact Tourism Vancouver at (604) 682-2222.

The next leg of our journey will take us to Alaska but for now, we reflect upon a wonderful ride aboard VIA Rail Canada's **Canadian**, truly the Queen of the Rails.

The author wishes to thank the following persons for their valuable assistance in preparing this article: Malcolm Andrews, VIA Rail Canada; Susan Kavanagh, Hotel Vancouver; and Laura Serena, Tourism Vancouver.

MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS

(continued from page 8)

in our continuing to do so as long as possible. Only private citizens, motivated by concern for the national welfare, can be counted upon to lead the movement for better rail service soon."

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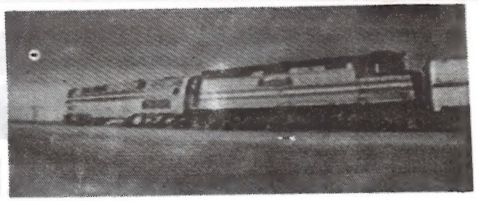
Currently active and operational Amtrak FL-9 locomotives, as of Aug 5, are nos. 484, 486 and 487. Unit 485 is available for use. Stored as unserviceable are nos. 488 and 489.

According to Amtrak shop personnel, the FL-9 and P32AC-DM Genesis units are adjustable from NYC-type third rail to LIRR-type, but it must be done in the shops. Rail observers have been wondering how Amtrak did it in June for its trip to Shea Stadium. They could have configured one shoe on each engine for each third-rail system, which would have been undesirable, because the power would shut off through switches and cross-overs. They could not have gone push-pull, with one engine set up for each system, controlling from the lead unit, because the train-set was not all push-pull capable. Perhaps some shop workers could have changed it over once they were off the platform at Penn Station, but how long would that operation have taken?

An Amtrak strike could possibly start as early as Sep 5, as the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way employees reportedly rejected arbitration with Amtrak. The National Labor Mediation Board on Aug 5 suspended its mediation of the disagreement, starting a 30-day cooling-off period that expires Sep 5. At that time, a strike could be called, or Amtrak could impose new work rules, or President Clinton could appoint a Presidential Emergency Board to study the dispute for 30 more days.

High-speed rail service between Richmond VA and Washington DC was favored by 80% of people in a poll taken by the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce, reported the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* in July. That number made it one of the most popular ideas in the survey. The poll also found that only 13% of those responding had used rail for their travel in the past year. Said Virginia Association of Railway Patrons president Michael Testerman, "I think this demonstrates that the will of the people is being restrained. There is greater demand than the politicians want to admit for travel options other than expanding the road network, and that demand is going to grow."

The paper reported that Virginia Dept of Rail and Public Transportation director Leo Bevon remarked that "In Virginia passenger rail has an extremely bright future." A Richmond Chamber study showed that by 2015 a high-speed rail line Richmond-Washington could save 1.2 million commuter hours per year, cut fuel consumption by 6.4 million gallons a year and create over 4200 jobs.



The photos above are taken from one of a series of passenger train programs that aired here on PBS (mentioned previously in RTN). The left photo shows the northbound Coast Starlight emerging from a tunnel in the Santa Susana Mountains, while on the right the camera paces the train on a straightaway in Southern California. They are from the Coast Starlight program, which also featured the Napa Valley Wine Train. The series of five, each with a different scenic rail route, was produced by an Oregon PBS station. The other four were the Adirondack, the Alaska RR, VIA Rail's Skeena, and Mexico's Copper Canyon route (by private train). One of the crew members interview aboard the Adirondack was Conductor Craig Allyn, who was profiled in an article by RTN contributor Jack Turner in a 1994 PTJ article.

These programs are extremely well done. They feature travelogue material as well as the train ride, and they seem designed to make instant train lovers out of any viewers. Ask your PBS station to air them if it hasn't. The series is titled "America's Scenic Rail Journeys" and the videos are available for sale; call 1-800-311-7467.

Tennessee Pass line, formerly D&RGW and now on the UP, was closed down Friday, Aug 15 after the passage of the last train that evening.

More on the Aug 9 **SW Chief** derailment (see p. 9): The new GE P42 locomotives on the train have shielded, crash-resistant fuel tanks, and apparently that feature prevented a more devastating outcome of the accident. Reports are that in the derailment a broken rail pierced the fuel tanks and a baggage car, but only a small amount of fuel leaked out, thanks to the improved tanks. Also, improvements put in place as a result of previous crash experience made the accident less disastrous: interior restraints in the Superliner cars prevented baggage from flying about, and the crew used light sticks that are now provided, to guide people out of the train with the power knocked out. NARP pointed out a similarity between this accident and the **Sunset** wreck in the bayou in Alabama in 1993: "...even though bridges were damaged in both cases, welded rail stayed together and did not break the signal circuit. The signals stayed green and the trains went right on into the damaged area. This reinforces the need for sensors that can interrupt a signal circuit when a bridge is damaged or mis-aligned, just the way a broken rail would".

Rail Advocates' two priorities in August, NARP said, are to tell Pres. Clinton to support Amtrak re-authorization, and to tell Congress to support the Senate's Amtrak operating and mandatory payment figures in the 1998 transportation appropriations bill.

CP Rail police in late June began a "zero-tolerance policy" toward trespassers and crossings violators on CP tracks between Mission and Vancouver BC, issuing fines of up to $1000 in an effort to improve safety and reduce fatalities. —Dean Ogle.

The SW Chief began serving Mendota IL Aug 9. The city is listed in the current timetable with a note that service will start on a date to be announced. The station was renovated, and a ceremony was held on the 9th, in conjunction with the Mendota sweet corn festival. The next day, Sunday the 10th, the eastbd train never reached the station, for that was the train that derailed near Kingman AZ.

Amtrak's fare structure will change Aug 29. Amtrak will divide the nation into four zones for its All Aboard America fares by adding a Florida zone that stretches from Savannah GA south and from Pensacola FL east. Also, the Eastern zone will be further shrunk, as the dividing point between the East and Central regions will become Pensacola, Atlanta, Toledo, Fostoria and several Michigan points such as Ann Arbor. Someone traveling from NY to Florida will have to pay for two regions instead of one. Even costlier will be a circle trip from Florida to Chicago via New Orleans and returning via NY or Washington. This will now involve 3 regions, not just one. The maximum number of regions charged is 3.

This issue contains 28 pages, in addition to wrapper. Besides pp. 1-24, there are pages numbered 4-A, 4-B, 20-A and 20-B.

News in this issue is updated through Aug 19.

Correction: In RTN 571, p.8, col. 2, the Critical Mass group meets only the last Fri of each month.

RAIL CANADA WILL APPEAR AGAIN IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF RTN

RAIL FANTRIPS

Sep 20-21: Ohio State Ltd, our 1st excursion featuring Superliners (9). Cleveland-Galion-Cincinnati RT on ex-NYC Ohio St. Ltd train rte, best avail rte for proposed 3-C service. 4 diff pkgs avail $195-$265. Mad River & NKP RR Society, 233 York St, Bellevue OH 44811. Ph 419-483-2222.

Sep 21: Electro-Motive Div of GM 75th anniv open house, La Grange IL. Motor excursion St. Louis to EMD facility, rare look into major loco building plant. $75 incl bkfst snack, lunch, dinner, drinks. Amer. Association of Railroaders Inc, 4351 Holly Hills Blvd, St Louis MO 63116. Ph 314-752-3148.

Oct 4&5: Altoona Railfast '97. Visit Altoona RR Memorial Museum, walking tour of Conrail Juniata Shops, etc. CR Shops host Amtrak equip & Great Amer. Station Foundation Whistle Stop Train. $10. Weekender pass $22. Excursion $12. Info: RR Mem. Museum 814-946-0834. Festival hrs 9-5.

Nov 16: RAIL-A-RAMA XXV at White's Hospitality Ctr in Westport MA, 10-4. Railroad hobby show. Admis.$2. Info: Mystic Valley Rwy Society, Box 365468, Hyde Park MA 02136. Ph 617-361-4445.

Nov 27: Thanksgiving Holiday Excursion, Boston. "Thanksgiving at Lake Shore Farm", bus from T stations to Northwood NH at Jennings Pond. Buffet dinner. $32. Mystic Valley (address above).

Send large SASE to addresses. One listing in RTN is free. It must give specific dates of operation. Next issue is our Excursion of the Month feature, appearing in alternate issues. Write: Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. E-mail rtn@trainweb.com

MIDWEST REPORT

Kansas City Royals baseball team, reports the Kansas City Star, used Amtrak after closing out a series at Boston's Fenway Park Aug 11. They were next to open a series with the NY Yankees, and ride in chartered coaches on a regularly scheduled NEDirect train from Boston So. Station to NY Penn. The Boston coach yards reportedly was ready to cut off the coaches from the originally scheduled train if the game had gone extra innings. If so, they would have traveled on the next available NEDirect train.

The TRRA High Line in St. Louis, which runs along the Mississippi River and through the tunnels under the Gateway Arch, has been closed for bridge work, which will take about three months. Amtrak Chicago to St. Louis traffic, and BNSF freight, which used this route, must squeeze in along with Union Pacific freight and Conrail/NS transfer traffic on the MacArthur Bridge over the river from East St. Louis.

Toledo OH's newspaper, The Blade, has produced some very knowledgeable editorials on Amtrak. One of the latest, in the Aug 10 issue, supports the Amtrak re-authorization bill and Amtrak funding in general. The paper criticizes American politicians for making transportation "a stepchild of social policy", in contrast to most other countries. It criticizes the US for heavily subsidizing other forms of transportation: "Gasoline taxes do not begin to pay for the costs of building and maintaining highways, alleviating pollution, and providing parking for motorists, most of whom would recoil at the thought of car pooling or using public transit." Complains the Blade, "...it does seem that Congress does meddle in Amtrak policy while systematically starving the system. As a result, Amtrak is literally eating its own tail and is teetering on the brink of bankrupty." Concludes the paper, "Passenger rail service deserves the same priority in this country as it does in other enlightened societies."

The Sandusky Register is another Ohio newspaper editorially supporting passenger rail. In an Aug 1 editorial, "Passenger rail has a place in Ohio's future", the paper (noting that the editorial reflects the consensus of the paper's 6-person editorial board) laments that the Ohio Rail Development Commission has decided this year to spend less than $100,000 of its $6 million discretionary fund to promote passenger rail, as opposed to freight rail. The paper concludes that "Of course, passenger rail is going to be expensive to develop... But we have to ask: Would we rather continue to spend the money fixing highways to keep them operating under the strain of an ever-increasing number of vehicles?"

The Michigan, Ohio and Indiana Associations of RR Passengers are joining together to publish a combined newsletter. It will be a quarterly in tabloid format and including color photos.

CARS & CONSISTS

*Consist of **Canadian** ridden by Jack Turner in his article starting on p. 10: engines VIA 6437 (F40, Jasper to Vancouver), 6440 (F40 Toronto to Jasper), rest Toronto to Vancouver: 6439 F40; cars 8609 baggage, coaches 8104, 8111, 8106, diner "Alexandra", Skyline dome 8515, sleepers 8302 "Allan Manor", 8311 "Burton Manor", 8339 "Sherwood Manor", Skyline dome 8500, sleepers 8331 "Jarvis Manor", 8321 "Draper Manor", 8326 "Franklin Manor", 8320 "Douglas Manor", Skyline dome 8509, sleepers 8342 "Wolfe Manor", 8220 "Chateau Papineau", 8328 "Grant Manor", dome observation sleeper 8714 "Strathcona Park".

***Mayflower**, train 171, New Haven Aug 10: engines 203 & 226 (F40s, elephant-style) off at New Haven; cars 21104, Metroliner 44175, 21648 & 21225 coaches, cafe 20047, Custom 21926, coach-cafe-club 20141, baggage cars 1166 & 1252, MHCs 1543 & 1439, baggage car (former coach) 1728, MHC 1426. Train 471's equipment was added to the head of 171, making a monster 16-car train. Rear four cars were off the high-level platform, but had chalked destinations for contents, to points as far south as Florida.

*Train 471, New Haven Aug 10: engines 413 (F40, off), AEM-7s 9?? & 922 on; cars 21120, 44600 & 21254 coaches.

***Patriot**, train 170, New Haven Aug 10: engine NortheastDirect AEM-7 #940 off, F40s 260 & 258 elephant-style on; cars coaches 21097, 21153, 21605, 21167 & 21075, cafe 20128. —Bob Underwood.

*Notes: P42 engines have complete blue band replacing the original P42 tri-color striping including rear band, matching NEDir-ect coaches and AEM7s. Other sources report that of the 14 Superliner baggage-coaches remaing six are assigned to the Western Bus-iness Unit and eight to the **City of New Or-leans/Empire Builder**, the only train with both types. The 10/6 dorm-smoker lounges kept their names; thus 2500 is "Pine Brook". The **Crescent** has been changing engines at Philadelphia since May 11, speeding up its Washington stop by 20mins at a busy time on the through tracks, with trains 80 & 91 plus VRE service. A sales person in the **Auto Train** ticket office provided a printed consist to friends of mine traveling north for my son's wedding Aug 2 in Darien CT. My hotel room in Stamford CT provided good viewing of the yard and station, but too far away to read equipment numbers. I did note that train 67, the **Twilight Shoreliner**, on Aug 2 had baggage plus six passenger cars, the last being the Viewliner sleeper; and no. 13, the **Fast Mail** (not listed in timetables) had nine MHCs. —Jim Langan.

***Auto Train**, train 52, Sanford FL July 28: engines unknown; cars 39026 transition dorm slpr, 32116 "West Virginia", 32089 "Massachusetts", & 32501 "Palm Bay" slprs, 33034 first-class lounge, 38053 first-class diner, 32503 "A. Philip Randolph" & 32090 "Michigan" slprs, 38047 diner (as smoker?), 34127, 34130 & 34121 coaches, 38029 diner, 34118, 34123 & 34126 coaches, 38067 diner, plus 14 bi-level, six tri-level and three van auto carriers.

***Vermonter**, train 56, Stamford CT Aug 2: engine 922 (AEM7); cars 9641 cab-coach, coaches 44675, 44243 & 44673, Custom coach 48157, baggage 1802. —Jim Langan.

THE OPEN VESTIBULE

I have been reading RTN from just about day one. I have enjoyed reading the ups and downs of Amtrak, so I thought I would share my thoughts of the trip I made in April:

The **Southwest Chief** from Kingman AZ to Chicago and return Apr 8-9 and 21-22: I happened to have the same train personnel going and returning. They were all very courteous, very efficient and pleasant. The dining was excellent and nicely served. One glitch!--Going, one dining car person, working the sleeper passengers, didn't mind giving her opinion verbally on what she thought and loud enough so everyone close by could hear. One prize comment was concerning the custom of tipping, referring to a couple who had just left the diner and hadn't left a tip. She said they must have been from another country. It just so happened they were from England. I didn't know that we had a law requiring tipping. I had the thought that this lady's mouth was going to get her into trouble some day. *Guess what?* On the return trip, this same person seated me with another couple, then had problems getting her order from another table,

then proceeded to dump the salads, drinks, etc., on the lady at my table. Accidents do happen, but a big deal was made of it. The attendant, and her vocal being, made it sound like it was all the fault of the guest. The next morning I happen to follow this same couple to breakfast and the same attendant announced to everyone close by that she was not going to wait on *those people*. That was okay with all of us, so George took care of us. She suddenly disappeared and we had a new waiter out of Albuquerque that night. I understand she was taken out of service. Thank you, Mr. Crew chief and Amtrak for resolving this situation. Employees with an attitude like that can mean a lot of business going elsewhere.

I had an economy bedroom on the "George M. Pullman" Superliner, room 11 going, room 12 returning. I happen to like the downstairs rooms for convenience. Also, the on-board chief wasn't afraid to use the PA and was at times very witty. All in all, an enjoyable ride. It would be nice if the Santa Fe would do some trackwork east of La Junta. It was rough as a cob in 1983, again in 1992 and it's not getting any better.

Lake Shore Ltd, Apr 9-10: A good ride and good sleeping. I had been assigned room 11 again on Viewliner 62011 "Gulf View." Conrail's track is excellent and good riding, but their on-time performance needs some attention. Somehow Amtrak needs to find a way to put it to these certain railroads that love to put the passenger trains in the siding for boxcars.

I think the Viewliners are very nice, but they do lack storage space for baggage. Yes, I know. There is an overhead storage space, but did the designer ever try to fit a duffel bag-size piece of luggage into it? Fortunately, I was traveling alone, so my attendant had to put it into the upper bunk after he got the lower made up. People getting on the train in smaller stations cannot check baggage, so it will become a problem. Also, a better type of door lock needs to be used. I like leaving my door open, and twice was locked into the room, as movement of the train would scoot it shut. Thank God for the call button. Also, the toilet did interfere with using the sink and mirror, but not a big deal. The food and service were again excellent. We arrived Syracuse a little over 2hrs late, but in my particular case it was okay, as I had to wait for my friend from Hartford to pick me up. I also enjoyed the nice waiting room with the big windows. Good for train watching, as it was a cold day outside. I also found a good deli one block away, so I went there for lunch.

The Corridor, Apr 16: I rode Custom Class from Providence to Washington. Train 173 was on time. The only complaint I have about the equipment is the fact that the folding tables, windows, etc. vibrate a lot at high speeds. Someone needs to use a screwdriver. I have always liked the hominess of the Amfleet cars. I went to the cafe car and received my free paper, etc., and settled in. There was a lot of rain coming down and it really showed at New Haven. The Springfield connection was about 30mins late account of the weather. Coming into New Haven, we barely moved. All of the adjacent tracks were under water. The dwarf signals barely showed. We arrived New York City without making up much of our delay, but everything and everybody was ready for us. The cafe car was re-stocked, except the sandwiches didn't make it, and we got out of there, making up half of the time we lost, arriving in Washington just 10mins late. Thanks to a couple I was visiting with who shared their lunch with me. Being diabetic, I found it a lifesaver. Again, a good ride and courteous and efficient employees.

Capitol Ltd, Apr 20: We left Washington on time. I was assigned room 12 on Superliner II "Nevada". It is a beautiful train and again I received good service and friendliness. I decided not to have dinner under after passing Harpers Ferry, as the scenery is great. So until my 5:40pm dinner call, I headed for the lounge car. Some more good track and on-time performance. We passed three freights in the sidings for us. The scheduling is great on this train. All the good scenery in daylight. I remember arriving Pittsburgh on time, but the next morning, guess what? We are about 30mins late again. We are on Conrail.

We arrived Chicago 40mins late, but I had all day to spend. I must say thanks to Amtrak for the first-class lounges. I didn't get to use the one in Washington or to check the station out, as we were involved in a traffic jam, so arrived with very little time to spare. I did use the one in Chicago and it is really nice. The only complaint I can make about Union Station in Chicago is that it would be nice if there were a coffee shop-type restaurant. Not everyone likes eating fast food all the time.

While having all day in Chicago for connections, I rode the L out to Wrigley Field and took in a ball game. I had to leave early to make the train, so I rode by cab. For all of you who have never experienced a cab ride in Chicago, just have your insurance paid up and pray.

All in all, my trip was very relaxing and enjoyable. I would have to give Amtrak a 9 ½ rating. Keep up the good work.

R.H. Heuerman
Kingman, Arizona.

Greg Thompson (Open Vestibule, RTN 570) is a most dangerous man. He packages bogus "facts" and Conservative bull in a manner the uninitiated could mistake for the real world of transportation. Consider:

GT writes off cavalierly the adverse effect of subsidies. Without reviewing all the subsidy forms, suffice to say Amtrak riders yield a 75-cent farebox recovery. NJ Transit 55 cents, but the over-subsidized motorists give back only 12 cents, heavy trucks only 9 cents (which enables them to steal freight from fully-costed railroads), airlines only 6 cents, and barge operators a mere 3 cents (again this steals traffic from Amtrak host railroads, cutting the ability to put in place sufficient infrastructure to support a meaningful passenger service). Passengers and shippers follow the money to the lowest cost. Driving appears less expensive, so people drive. If the full infrastructure costs were assessed motorists, gasoline tax would rise $4.50 per gallon and train fares would be most attractive. It has been said over and over, these subsidies skew the market modal choice—eriod. GT doesn't want to admit that.

It is time for a legal eagle to investigate how Amtrak and rail transit passengers can sue, as they are denied equal protection under the law, as they must pay too much for mobility. That has worked to secure funds for other causes, and Amtrak is far more important to the mobility, environmental and energy efficiency.

Amtrak must field an expanded system. Two necessary routes come immediately to mind: Cleveland-Cincinnati-Louisville-Nashville-Memphis-Little Rock to provide "crosstown" connections, and Chicago-Nashville-Chattanooga-Atlanta-Florida. These routes (plus others we all know) will provide a meaningful rail grid. Amtrak can then address its myriad markets, local, long-haul, all-important tourism and some business travel. GT obviously never rode Amtrak and observed the intermediate on-offs and the varied makeup of the passengers. Few railfans, most passengers are real people going real places on real business or pleasure.

GT's claim that rural roads take no subsidy is totally wrong. USDOT figures show that all road-use charges cover only 67%of Federal and state highways. Not one cent goes to county roads and bridges and town streets—the rural network. Even those states with a rural road assistance program still fully subsidize rural roads as the auto-use charges they collect do not cover state highway costs.

As a member of the County Transportation Association of NJ, I hve greatly opened the eyes of Freeholders who pushed road expansion in search of development and ratables. The mirage was just that. In addition, most counties have had to underpost weights on bridges as the only defense against overweight trucks crushing the bridges. The truckers get away with murder (literally) lying on logs and crashing into cars, killing occupants. And they want triple bottoms all over America. The obscene highway death toll will take another ghastly jump.

GT claims airlines pay their own way—NOT! GT forgets the $5-billion free signal system airlines get, plus all airports are built with tax-free municipal bonds on land exempt from real estate taxes, when Amtrak's host railroads are raped with a ***half-billion annual*** real estate tax bill. GT is from Florida; how much will CSX pay extra for the double-tracking between West Palm Beach and Miami for added TriMet trains? Why should Metra pay double to on-line towns for their taxes on BN, UP and IC? And, GT, how much does parallel I-95 pay in real estate taxes? For an academic, the dog seems to have eaten a lot of your homework.

Most Conservatives in America (except Paul Weyrich) are firmly in the pocket of multinational ***big oil***, which does not want anything as energy efficient as rail transit. Even as America's own oil depletes and we grow ever more dependent on hostile Muslim sources, ***big oil*** continues the work of National City Lines. Since some Muslims have already declared a jihad against us, GT, Reps. Hefley, Arney and Sens. McCain and Shelby and the other pimps for ***big oil*** should have their loyalties investigated. Are they for American mobility or the fortunes of their ***big oil*** buddies?

GT waxed poetic about British Rail's "privatization". That ongoing mess probably cost the Tories and election and will cost the "old country" mucho pounds, as the law was written wisely to protect at least the existing level of service., and the privates find they can't hack it. Of historic interest, it was Beeching's slaughter of local English services in the 1960s that started the same effect ***big oil*** wants here. The answer is to make ever more places inaccessible by transit so more people ***must*** drive.

GT has many more points that must be challenged, but I am sure many rebuts will come forth.

William R. Wright
Cranford, New Jersey

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